

**AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

**Listing of claims:**

1. (currently amended) An isolated nucleic acid comprising ~~any one of the~~ following:
  - (a) a nucleic acid sequence encoding a polypeptide of SEQ ID NO: 10; or
  - ~~(b) a nucleic acid sequence at least 90% identical to the nucleic acid sequence of (a) above;~~
  - ~~(c)~~ (b) a nucleic acid encoding a polypeptide wherein the polypeptide has conservative amino acid substitutions to the polypeptide of SEQ ID NO: 10; [[;]] ~~or~~
  - ~~(d) a fragment of the nucleic acid sequence of (a), (b) or (c) above wherein the fragment comprises at least 20 nucleotides.~~
2. (currently amended) The nucleic acid of claim 1, wherein said nucleic acid is ~~selected from group consisting of DNA and~~ or RNA.
3. (currently amended) The nucleic acid of claim 1, wherein said nucleic acid comprises an open reading frame that encodes a polypeptide of SEQ ID NO: 10 ~~or its complement, or a mutant or variant thereof.~~
4. (original) The nucleic acid of claim 1, wherein said nucleic acid comprises a nucleic acid sequence which is SEQ ID NO: 9 or its complement.
5. – 9. (canceled)
10. (original) A vector comprising the nucleic acid of claim 1.
11. (original) A cell comprising the vector of claim 10.
12. (currently amended) The cell of claim 11 wherein said cell is a prokaryotic or eukaryotic cell comprising the nucleic acid sequence which is SEQ ID NO: 9, or its complement [[;]] ~~or a mutant or variant thereof.~~

13. (original) A pharmaceutical composition comprising the nucleic acid of claim 1 and a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier.

14. (original) A process for producing a polypeptide encoded by the nucleic acid of claim 1, said process comprising:

- (a) providing the cell of claim 11;
- (b) culturing said cell under conditions sufficient to express said polypeptide; and
- (c) recovering said polypeptide,

thereby producing said polypeptide.

15. (original) The process of claim 14 wherein said cell is a prokaryotic or eukaryotic cell.

16. (original) A process for identifying a compound that binds the nucleic acid of claim 1, the process comprising:

- (a) contacting said nucleic acid with a compound; and
- (b) determining whether said compound binds said nucleic acid sequence.

17. (original) A compound identified by the process of claim 16.